

NOTES AND SKETCHES

COLLECTED FROM A

VOYAGE IN THE NORTH-WEST

By

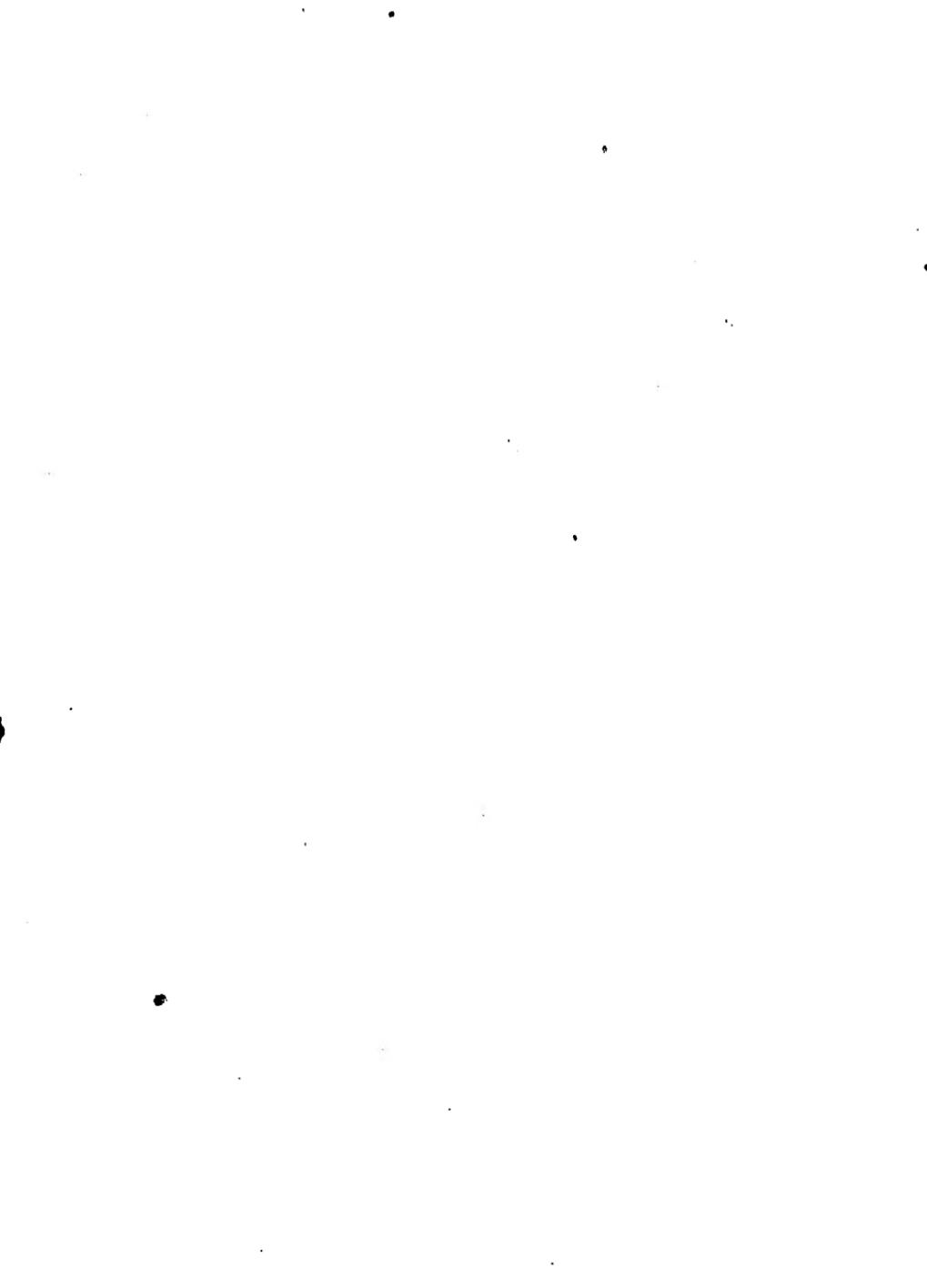
A SISTER OF CHARITY,
OF MONTREAL.

For the Furtherance of a Charitable Object.

MONTREAL:

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1875.



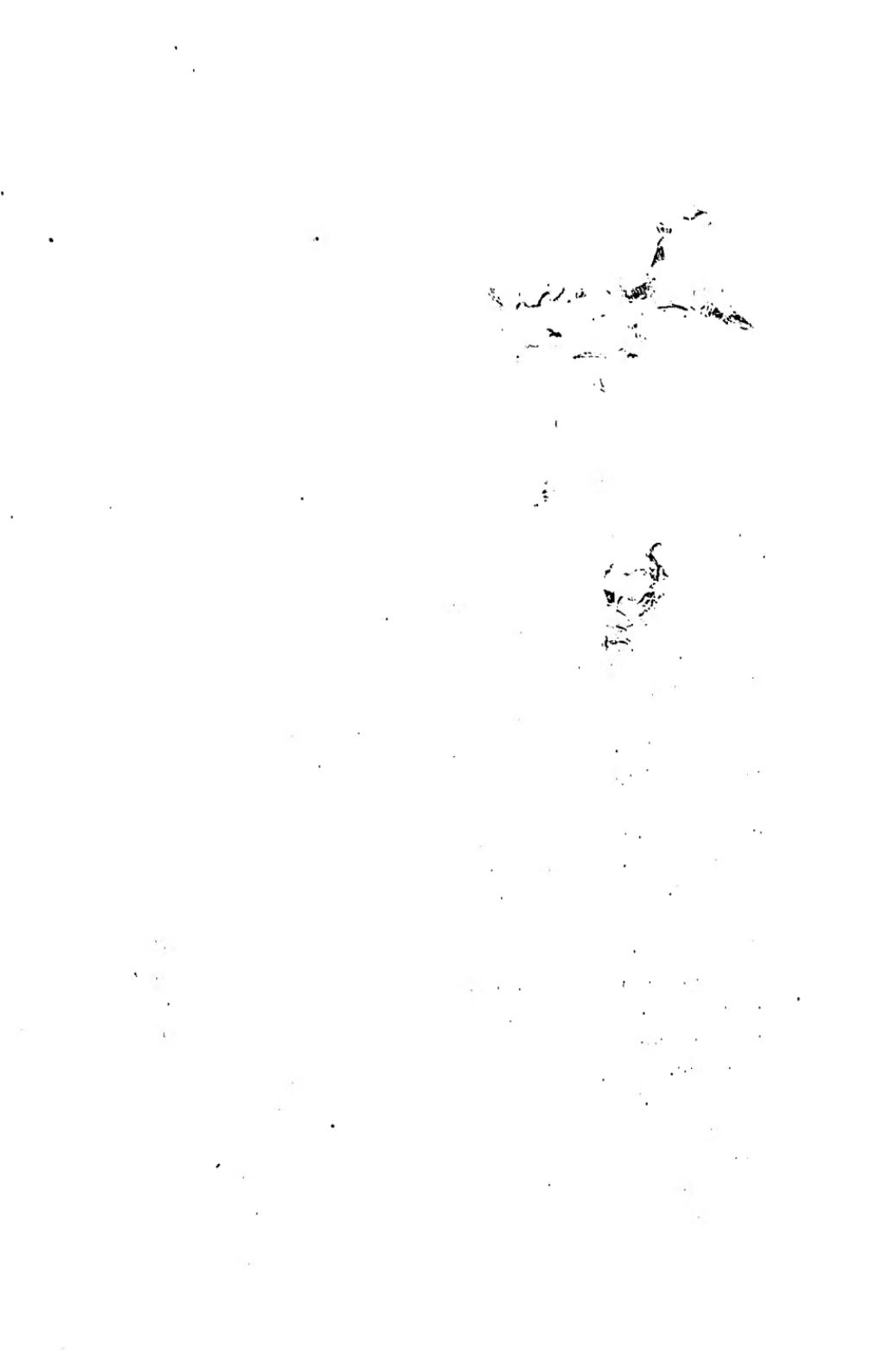
P R E F A C E.

THE end purposed by the Author in publishing these notes on the subject of a voyage to the extreme north is, (1st) To thank those charitable persons who have furnished her with means for undertaking such a journey—leaving at her disposal other resources, and enabling her thus to relieve the wants of the Missionary Sisters, who have sacrificed themselves in the service of the poor and the orphans of these cold regions. (2nd) To make a renewed appeal to their generosity by placing before their view the incalculable amount of good which yet remains to be done among the natives of this part of the Province, the innumerable privations, the extreme misery, the heroic sacrifices, which missionary sisters are obliged to undergo in order to maintain the good already commenced, to develop the works they have undertaken to perform, and preserve, on solid basis, the institutions hitherto founded.

May these few notes thus gathered together midst the fatigues of a hurried trip, be favorably received by the public, excite the sympathy of generous and devoted hearts, and incline them to bestow alms which would serve as a foundation, and, to a great extent, secure the happy future of these missions.

The smallest offering will be received with gratitude; a few dollars suffice to have your names enrolled among the benefactors of Canada.

We promise to have low mass said once a year in each of our missions on behalf of our benefactors living, another for the repose of the souls of all benefactors departed.



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VOYAGE IN THE NORTH-WEST.

Since the foundation of our institutions in the North-West, it would be difficult, if not altogether impossible, to convince ourselves of, or fully understand, the condition in which these missions are—how our sisters live; their temporal and spiritual difficulties. We possess a very limited knowledge of the immensity of good they do; but divine Providence having placed at our disposal sufficient means to undertake this journey, our Rev. Mother Superior selected me to carry in her name words of consolation to our far-off sisters.

The great day of sacrifice having arrived, 24th April, 1871, notwithstanding our preparation for it by several weeks of prayer, still the moment of departure for the Missionary Sister must ever prove one replete with feelings of anguish and pangs of grief, which words seem as mockery when used to describe.

I was chosen to conduct the nuns to their new home in the far-off West; hence my pain was intense when I looked around and beheld these loved sisters about to bid adieu, a *last* farewell, I may add, to all they cherish as most dear below—the mother house,—cradle of their religious infancy,—wherein rest the precious remains of their venerated Foundress, and before which they have knelt in earnest supplication, craving a long, parting benediction. The hope of returning at the expiration of two years, served to lighten the great sacrifice I would otherwise have been compelled to endure; such *hope*, alas! found no resting spot in the hearts of my companions—exile for them contained a mighty meaning,—it was the severing of the strongest ties,—the tearing asunder of the firmly linked

friendship,—in a word it meant the dissolution of all most sacred bonds uniting soul to soul on earth. A few short hours and we are carried far away by the rapidity of a locomotive, which, without the slightest respect for our heart-breaking remembrances, hurries us along towards our adopted home; then, oh! then does the weight of her sacrifice fall on the heart of the Missionary Nun, who has so lately sent up to heaven the immolation of nature's feelings—those feelings becoming now doubly intense as thus she finds herself hurriedly driven from her native country wherein such happy reminiscences have been gathered. On the 12th we arrived at Saint Boniface: joyous and cordial was our reception, and open the arms to embrace and welcome us after thirty years' separation.

VICARIAL HOUSE.

In this house are practised the same works as in the mother house in Montreal; further, it sustains a boarding school, which the sisters have been obliged to open temporarily in consequence of the want of Religious specially devoted to teaching. Several young ladies belonging to our first families have herein been educated; while I am fully convinced they have no cause whatever to excite them to envy our ladies of Canada; judging from their language and manners, I feel assured that their education has been thorough and complete in every respect. Admitted into the first society, they are an honor to their religion and country; they prove an example to their friends, procure the happiness of their husbands, and bring up their children in a Christian manner. Several of these young ladies have consecrated their lives to God by embracing the religious order, and are to-day teaching their young compatriots what they themselves have been taught in days past.

Our sisters commenced this mission in 1844, having since that time opened three houses on the same principle, ever practising the same meritorious works: one at Saint Norbert, another at Saint Vital, and the third at Saint Francis

Xavier; this latter, although but six leagues distant from Saint Boniface, is nevertheless no further advanced in civilization than are our far-off missions of Saint Albert and Isle à la Crosse, seeing that the natives, like those of the missions just mentioned, spend the greater part of the year on the prairie hunting buffalo, and accompanied by their children. Now, under these circumstances, if the Sisters had sufficient resources, numbers of children, in the absence of their parents, might be cared for; they would gladly take the entire charge of these little ones, and by this means civilize and instruct them. Here I must not forget to mention how edified and consoled I felt at Saint Boniface to see our sisters day and night full of zeal and fervor at the bedside of the sick, poor and rich, without distinction of religion or nation, gathering around them many little orphans abandoned and left such by the hand of death. In 1871, when I passed through this Province for the first time, I saw, to the great satisfaction of the Bishop and several families established in the district, that our Sisters proved the consolation to the inhabitants,—visiting them in distress and sickness, comforting and assisting them in poverty and trouble—consoling and cheering prisoners—the Government even beseeching them to survey its ranks in order to vaccinate those requiring it.

MISSIONS OF ISLE A LA CROSSE, LAC LABICHE AND ST. ALBERT.

The mission at St. Albert was founded the 19th Sept., 1858, by Bishop Grandin; two years later, 4th June, 1860, his Grace Archbishop Taché opened the hospital of Saint Bruno at Isle à la Crosse; this latter is at present under the control of Bishop Grandin. To this place I made my first visit. After having remained a month at Saint Boniface, I left the 16th of June, arriving at Isle à la Crosse the 26th of the following August. You will easily understand why it took so long to travel this distance when you are made aware of the fact that no railroad has yet penetrated

this far-off region,—that travelling must be done on foot or in carts driven by oxen. I was greatly relieved at seeing the amount of good wrought by our Sisters at this mission; considerable indeed when we reflect on the thousand obstacles to be surmounted; again, on the other hand, very little compared to what yet remains undone, for want of funds to carry out their designs.

At Isle à la Crosse we possess a school. The building in appearance is very simple, but doubly enhanced by the brilliant success which it has achieved. Would to God that the schools of the other missions afforded equal amount of satisfaction. The indifference of the natives to all that tends towards education is such, that the schools in question are but slightly encouraged; hence they appear to languish in a most miserable state. Nevertheless, the half-breed seem to be more alive to the good results of refined teaching, thus inspiring us with the hope that the classes will be more regularly followed, and success more visible.

In visiting these different missions, I met with tribes of Crees and *Montagnaises*, by whom scarcely a word is understood in any language but their native one; this it is which renders the education of their children so very difficult: however hard and painful, our Sisters have nevertheless undertaken the task, while between fifty and sixty children frequent their different schools. I have beheld with the utmost satisfaction the vast amount of good done by the nuns in the training and instruction of the young. I have also been greatly consoled to find that the devoted attention and zeal of our good Sisters, cause them to desire to do even more good, had they wherewith to further their object.

Beside the schools we have just spoken of, our sisters adopt orphans of both sexes, according as their means permit, bestowing on them the same advantages of education as those enjoyed by the day scholars. I have seen some of these young Indian children thus adopted become, in later years, excellent mothers of families, living and bringing up their children with equally as much care and solicitude as do our mothers of families in Canada, neglecting nothing in

regard to civilization and religion. Need I add what immense pleasure I experienced while conversing with several of these Indian mothers, now so thoroughly trained and happy. Nevertheless, my joy on these occasions was somewhat mingled with feelings of sadness, to know and to think that on the other hand so very many others were deprived of all these advantages in consequence of the scanty resources within our Sisters' reach—numberless little ones, who never will receive instruction, or become civilized, living as beings without reason, ignorant of the truths of their religion,—they exist and die without the knowledge of the existence of God. While speaking of the great amount of good done in these far-off missions, I must not forget to relate the following fact. Some weeks before my arrival at Saint Albert, a brave half-breed——having been badly wounded by the explosion of his gun—two bullets entering his side—the poor unfortunate was taken to the Fort, four days' journey on foot. Here not finding anyone able to attend to his wounds and extract the balls, he asked to be carried to the mission at Saint Albert, hoping that the Sisters might save his life, knowing at the same time that inflammation might set in at any moment, and cause death. They lost no time in placing him on a sledge, and having arrived at his destination, our Sisters bestowed on him every possible care and attention, one among whom was an excellent surgeon, "though herself ignorant of the fact," having made no special study, except that of her every-day experience, managed to extract the two bullets, and succeeded so well in her enterprise, that at the end of a few weeks our poor friend found himself so far recovered as to be able to return to Saint Boniface. People from the Fort, as well as the Indians and half-breeds, flock around this kind Sister with every assurance that she possesses the art of curing them, without saying anything of her wonderful skill as a dentist. Once again all this serves as a proof that God, to effect his ends, frequently makes use of the most feeble instruments.

Our sisters of these missions visit from house to house, take charge of the sick, also take under their protection

aged people of both sexes, and all this in proportion as their limited means allow. The life they lead is frequently rough and painful, without alluding to the loneliness they must necessarily suffer; they are oftentimes obliged to undertake work much beyond their strength,—laboring in the fields, digging their own gardens, doing washing for themselves as well as for their sick and infirm. Notwithstanding this isolation and misery, I have found them happy and content, even in the midst of such numberless deprivations. They appear to acknowledge but one regret, that of not being able to do all the good they would wish in consequence of their scanty resources.

ORPHAN ASYLUMS.

Here I wish to draw the attention of my readers to the above mentioned—through them as their most powerful means do our Sisters produce wonderful results. Such good results indeed, as would remain permanent did kind Providence furnish them with money sufficient to help them on in their undertaking. Notwithstanding their extreme poverty and numerous demands from every side, the vast amount of charity wrought through these institutions is almost surprising. Could they be augmented and strengthened, then would I gladly answer for their future prosperous career.

The mission at Saint Albert is filled with Indian children, Cris, Blackfoot, Assiniboines; at Isle à la Crosse, with Cris and Montagnais. Little children thus trained with the half-breed, lose to a great extent what would otherwise remain of the wild savage. They speak a civilized language; know how to read and write when grown up, instead of spending their lives like the untrained savage in the woods or prairies. They marry with the half-breed and remain as civilized creatures. At Saint Albert the small-pox had spread fearful effects among the Indians. There are at the asylum many who are lame and blind, who would not consequently be tolerated elsewhere than with the Sisters of Charity. Many children have been torn from the

arms of, I may say, what appeared inevitable death, brought to the asylum, and rescued from want. In later years, these same children have become excellent members of society and good Christians in every sense of the word. Many others could receive the same advantages, and partake of these inestimable privileges, had we space to admit them all, but in our present impossibility we must content ourselves by accepting those whom the hand of death has classed among the destitute orphan. Oh! would to God that we could afford them each a shelter. Every day new applications are made; notwithstanding their earnestness, we are obliged to send a refusal.

We are at present absolutely unable to receive any but those suffering from the keenest pangs of misery; such, for example, as a little Indian boy, whom they attempted to bury with his mother's corpse. Another, our Sisters refused admittance for want of room and clothes to dress him: his uncle, however, insisted, and remarked to the Superior, "If you do not wish to keep him, throw him out; I will have nothing further to do with him." A young Indian boy, after having seen his father, mother, brothers, and all the family depart this life in his presence, remained in the midst of these dead bodies, although the poisoned air was choking him, until he was frightened into the woods by the howling of dogs, who were disputing over the remains of the unfortunate parents. This young child lived *alone* for twenty days, having nothing to eat but the wild fruit he might pick up in the woods; at last he was met by some Indians, who took charge of him until they came across a missionary, whom they obliged to accept the unprotected boy. This poor child still remembers his many hardships, and relates his tale of woe with such visible innocence as to bring forth a tear from many a listener's eye.

The small-pox, during its fearful ravages, made many a destitute orphan among the Indians. A father and mother having died, left two young children sick in the house. The missionary who took charge of them was frequently obliged to be absent, having so many others depending on his care. These two children, as soon as they could

walk, found means of escaping during the absence of their charitable friend, to seek their parents, whom they hoped to find in the camp. They were immediately repulsed by the remaining friends, who feared contracting the disease. These little ones returned to the missionary and besought him for shelter, saying, "Father, what will become of us since everyone casts us off?" The good Father, touched by this child-like appeal, took charge of them, and afterwards confided them to the care of the sisters. One of the nuns, travelling from Lac Labiche to Saint Albert, found at Lac la Selle a poor little girl whose great misery touched her even to tears. Her father had been received by the Rev. Missionary Father, but she requiring maternal care, could not enjoy the same privilege. The Indians wishing to be relieved of their charge at any cost, and finding no other means of so doing, treated her with such cruelty as to almost produce insanity. The Sisters already aware that the house was full, could not think of giving her shelter, but the unfortunate young victim pleaded her case so well, that the Superior at last succeeded in finding room for her together with a young brother. The Sisters perceiving her face and arms covered with blisters, asked the cause. It appears the Indians with whom she was stopping, in order to get her away, had thus disfigured and ill-treated her, inflicting punishment in the most cruel manner. This ill-treatment would certainly have been sufficient to weaken the child's intelligence; nevertheless, young and little as she was, she shewed great facility in learning to read and write, and has relieved the nuns of all apprehension that she will grow up an idiot.

Here I must content myself by the recital of these facts, for were I to continue, I might give the history, more or less interesting, of each young inmate of our Institution. After all that has been said, it is quite evident that two great essentials are missing in our efforts to educate the orphan,—sufficient means and sufficient lodgings to cover and shelter them against the thousand misfortunes ever ready to make them its victims. Did we possess ample means, we could easily secure a sufficient number of nuns. At Saint Albert

and at Lac Labiche, the buildings are large enough to accommodate the nuns and admit of a small school, but it would be impossible to receive any number of orphans. To-day at these missions I would be altogether unable to dress the little ones were it not for the charity, truly worthy of heartfelt praise, bestowed on us by Messrs. W. Christie and Hardesty, Protestant gentlemen, factors belonging to Fort Edmonton, "near Saint Albert," who, of their own accord, by their alms and subscription raised among their friends, have come to our Sister's rescue, and enabled them thus to support the asylum. This help is nevertheless only of temporary duration; at the expiration of a year these resources will be expended, and our good undertaking on the eve of ruin.

Seeing themselves thus unable to continue the progress of the asylum, they besought me with all earnestness to come to their assistance; it did not require very strong arguments to convince me of their distress. I saw it with feelings of regret, remarked it frequently in the midst of their labors and sufferings, and yet I ask, what can I do? Since I have nothing to give, I can at least solicit alms in their behalf, be an advocate not only among my friends, but among all generous souls who possess feelings for suffering humanity, and seek the interests of true Christianity. I can, without much difficulty, find Sisters who can sacrifice themselves and leave their country, parents, and friends, in order to procure the education of these wild savages; but I cannot bind myself to work miracles to secure the work; without a doubt, great zeal and devotedness are required, but means are also wanting to bring forth fruit. Zeal does a great amount of good, but every day's experience proves it cannot do all. May those who have read these pages, understand my fervent appeal, and come forth to lend a helping hand to the poor orphans of the North-West.

MCKENZIE RIVER.

I have not had the consolation of visiting this mission, but I feel convinced, from reliable authority, that the pro-

gress made by the children here has far surpassed our most sanguine expectations in regard to civilization and religious education. One of the first Factors belonging to the Hudson's Bay service, having occasion to visit the school and orphan asylum, found himself so satisfied with the progress made by the children, believed it his duty to compensate the Sisters for their devotedness and labors by allowing several chests belonging to them to be carried free of charge on the boats owned by the company; had it not been for this gentleman's generosity, these cases, already a long time on the road, might have remained so for years, thus depriving the nuns of many indispensable requisites. Further letters we receive from the authorities of this district largely console us, and compensate to a great extent for the pain we experience in seeing our kind companions so far separated, exiled, as it were, to the other end of the world, all to procure the glory of God.

The knowledge of the good wrought in these wild regions has touched us so deeply, that next spring three of our order, along with two girls, are leaving to join those already there, thus to continue a new mission at Arthabaska, conducted on the same principle as the one at McKenzie River.

WINTER TRAVELLING.

Travelling in winter is difficult and painful, resembling in no respect that of the finer seasons. Below is a slight summary of a voyage I was obliged to undertake in the month of November, 1872, when already were felt the rigors of a winter in the cold North.

I left Lac de la Biche the 16th of November, with the cold of 36° below zero, to go to the mission situated at St. Albert. I was the only woman, and never at this season of the year, have they told me, do we see a civilized female travelling over these immense prairies. Here I would strongly dissuade anyone, through simple pleasure, from undertaking the same project, for, I promise, they would bitterly repent it; not alone on account of the cold they would be compelled to support, or on account of the many other in-

conveniences to which they would be subject, no! no, but for reason of the intense fear with which they would unavoidably be seized in hearing the howling of the wolves, whose recent foot-prints indicate them at no great distance from the unfortunate traveller.

Observe the existing mode of travelling during winter in these far-off places. The moment of departure having arrived, without much attention to ceremony, you are told to stretch in a species of sledge, drawn by dogs. Once arranged in this manner you are firmly laced in, thus, to a great extent secure against cold, and prevented from being left in a bank of snow. In cases of accident, if hurrying, you have the misfortune to turn over, you must crave for assistance from your neighbor, for in this position you are unable to help yourself. Here is a description of the sledge: a simple board, turned up at both ends, forms the foundation; the sides are made of thick skin, with holes a short space apart, through which is passed a strong cord made of catgut, which serves for the lacing purpose. Arriving at your destination, you are delivered from these fetters, which, I assure you, generally leave your members fatigued and benumbed. Perhaps, now, curiosity might prompt you with the desire to know how we can eat and sleep in the open air in cold as intense as is generally felt in the north. As the meal is simple and frugal, it does not require great preparation, consequently the cooking is soon completed. We always manage to camp in or near the woods, where, on arriving, the men set to work: one is breaking down trees, another preparing the requisits wherewith to build a fire, while you can see the third hurrying with the vessel in which he has gathered snow. In a short space of time, with a strong fire, the water is boiling; into this you throw a piece of *tora*, adding a handful of flour; thus is made the renowned, delicious dish, called *rabibon*, partaken of with an appetite not unlikely to excite the envy of many an epicure. You are devoured, as it were, with hunger; this satiates you at the same time, warming your cold and shivering members at the side of the bright fire, which seems to implore you to partake of its refreshing blasts.

When the hour of camping for the night has arrived, which is generally about four o'clock, we go through the same performance as for dinner. After a hearty supper, which in no way differs from our first meal, we heap branches of fir trees, cover them with a robe, and in this manner, rest for the night, renewing our confidence in the providence of God, trying to control our imagination and prevent it from dwelling on the thoughts of wolves, &c., fears from which I was fortunately exempt. Towards morning, the fire of the previous evening being totally extinct, is once again lighted to warm and cheer us up, inspiring renewed courage for our further journey, with which we hasten to proceed, with eyes closed, on account of the smoke, which appears to have lost all respect for us, which we cannot avoid, unless by continuing our journey, which we hasten to do. The nights, as you can well imagine, do not offer all desirable comfort, and here we must add, should it happen to snow during our sleep, we find ourselves covered with a heavy mantle; great precaution must be used in removing the buffalo skin that has protected our face, otherwise, if stirred too awkwardly, it would serve us as an alarm clock, with which we might easily dispense. I managed this trip in ten days, without any accident; on the 25th of the same month found myself in the midst of the dear Sisters of St. Albert's mission. On this occasion joy and happiness were shared alike on both sides; abundance of tears easily betrayed the fulness of our hearts; these are the emotions, which once conceived in the human soul are with difficulty ever effaced. Could we expect differently from these poor exiles? Separated by thousands of miles from their country, their families and friends; and, above all, from their loved mother-house, seeing and speaking to no one but Indians, whom they love, it is true, since for their sake, to carry to them the knowledge of the Gospel, they have undergone such privations. Lively sentiments of faith and hope must be profoundly engraven on the soul, in order to win her to tear asunder all the ties that bind her to her country, to the community, the cradle of her spiritual infancy, the witness of her solemn vows, and early

years of immolation. All these are precious souvenirs to the heart of the Missionary Sisters, buried thus in the desert of a wild and uncivilized country. It is now a source of great happiness for me to reflect on the days so spent with our dear exiles, when our hearts filled with reciprocal affection, mutually disclose their pleasures and their pains: they to pour forth the knowledge of their loneliness, and the numberless privations to which their situation has subjected them leaving me, on my side, with all possible sympathy to encourage them on in their meritorious career. Notwithstanding, so many incomprehensible sacrifices, I feel consoled in being able to testify to the great happiness enjoyed by the Sisters in their far distant missions. Unceasingly they thank God for having chosen them to this work, and labor in propagating the knowledge of his holy name. I had almost forgotten to mention the reason why, on returning from Saint Albert, I made the journey alone. Having left Saint Boniface for Isle à La Cross, the 19th June, 1871, I left two Sisters and two girls at Lac Labiche, continuing with one Sister and one girl, whom I in turn left at Isle à la Crosse. In the meantime I anticipated having on my trip back, as companion, a Missionary Sister, whose health was much debilitated in consequence of all the privations and fatigues which years of sacrifice had forced her to accept. To my request this dear Sister calmly answered: "Through obedience I will do as you wish; if you leave me free, I would ask you to allow me thus continue my life of labor and love.

RETURNING TO RED RIVER.

Scarcely am I on the road returning to the Red River, than I hasten to take up my little journal; as previously, I will content myself by relating the principal incidents of my trip; besides, I cannot say I am comfortably installed at my desk, having none for the purpose, but that of my knees. Again, I can only write during the time we remain to partake of a meal of pemmican, during which time, also, our dogs refresh and rest themselves; without this latter precaution we run the risk of being left on the road.

Yesterday, the eleventh, was the day fixed for our departure from Saint Albert, after a sojourn of four months at this mission, in company with my dearly beloved Sisters, to whom I must now think of saying a long farewell. Hence, it is not surprising that our recreations became less gay, apprehending, as it were, the hour of separation; our hearts were sad, and more than once a silent tear would tell the grief each one was enduring. Their looks even seemed to reproach me for leaving them so soon, poor exiles, away from their homes and country, from their community, dearer to them now than ever, these dear lonely Sisters thus left to a life of sacrifice and privations. Imposing silence on my own heartfelt emotions, I tried my utmost to console them by the assurance that in four or five years, with God's help, they would again enjoy the same happiness. At last the hour struck, indicating that departure was at hand: one long embrace, one parting word, imploring renewed courage and strength; pointing to heaven above as the end of their exile, I loose myself from their clasp, while hurrying, soon found myself in the cart already waiting for us, forced on account of bad roads to leave our dog waggons. Here, I am seated on my little trunk containing a few indispensable articles of clothing, all that is left of three large valises which followed on my departure from Canada. A person, to understand, must have himself travelled over these immense prairies in spring through heaps of snow, when two or three caravans have scarcely left a vestige of their presence; a person, I repeat, must have gone over this road to fully conceive the perils and difficulties without number, which so frequently greet the traveller. At one moment the worn-out horses seem unwilling to advance, at another the waggon smashes in the act of drawing its load over some rough piece of road, thus exposing its occupants to the unpleasant sensation of finding themselves launched in water or in snow.

Oftentimes it is difficult to reach a proper place for camping; all these obstacles seem nothing compared to the awful dangers we encounter in crossing rivers. We had already been walking for several days when we came in

sight of Permillion River, over which we were forced to go, although the water at the time was two feet above the ice : making the sign of the cross, managing my own horse, I found myself at the mercy of the waters ; an involuntary fear crept over me at the thought that each moment was, for me, one of imminent peril ; happily, however, we were soon safely across, but only to be welcomed by another one much more dangerous than the former—Buffalo River, situated at the height of a rapid, offering a thousand difficulties ; renewing all possible courage, after a short prayer, I made a bold attempt : scarcely had I reached the middle, when my horse refused to advance, the current being so strong, the poor animal found himself drawn backwards ; I doubted for our deliverance. when fortunately an English half-breed, going the same road, came to our assistance, unhitched our beast and placed his own in its stead ; thus equiped, without any further accident, we soon found ourselves securely landed on the opposite side. However, I tried to recompence our brave half-breed by bestowing on him what we call a prairie warmer, a drink made of essence of pepermint and hot water.

It is now time to say a word relative to our camping in the spring season, which is more or less agreeable according to the temperature. When it is cold, and the ground frozen, our beds, although hard, are at least dry ; on the contrary, if the weather is mild and a thaw sets in, we have to content ourselves with a damp bed, notwithstanding all our precautions in heaping dead leaves and fine branches as a preventive against such danger. If we are overtaken by a storm, when the rain, the wind and the thunder seem to plot against us, then our position is anything but pleasant, dreading each moment lest our tent should fall or be blown away by the hurricane. Overlooking these many vexations and disappointments, I must confess that I like this mode of travelling. Nature itself appears to speak to the heart, while the reigning silence on the spacious prairies, alone interupted by the sweet song of birds, all tend to fill the soul with aspirations of heaven, and excite therein pious sentiments of faith and love.

On the third of May, after a journey achieved in such a quiet monotonous manner, we find ourselves once again on our road to Saint Boniface. This day I greeted as the feast of the Holy Cross—the patron festival of our institution—renewing without any labor all my religious souvenirs, I felt myself transported in spirit to our dear mother-house in Montreal, while without being perceived I united my prayers to those of our loved Sisters, asking for them as well as for the entire community, the true Christian virtues of immolation and sacrifice. This morning I had the extreme happiness of hearing Mass and receiving Communion from the hands of his Lordship Bishop Grandin; thus you see our dear Saviour amply repaid me for the pain I was enduring in being separated on this great day of spiritual rejoicing.

I pass over in silence many other interesting incidents, but time compels me to be very brief, for now I find myself at the 18th of the same month.

We were on the borders of the Saskatchewan river, about three weeks journey from Saint Boniface. As I was about giving orders to the men to arrange my tent, I heard myself called; suddenly turning around I noticed a gentleman, who approached and introduced himself as Mr. Belanger, factor of the Hudson Bay Company. Great and agreeable was my surprise, as I had previously heard this gentleman spoken of, being brother of one of our Sisters in Montreal. After making enquiries about his wife and children, he kindly offered to conduct me to Mr Clark's, factor of the Fort at Carlton, which generosity I willingly accepted. Arriving at his residence, we were received with the most open and cordial hospitality. Mr. Belanger then bade us farewell being obliged to start immediately for Fort Cumberland. I offered my heartfelt thanks for his delicate attention me, as also for the kind benevolence with which he always received our Sisters travelling in the North. I did not omit to send my affectionate salutations to his dear wife, who was educated at our institution at St. Boniface, and who, with Mr. Belanger, does her utmost to receive the Grey Sisters with all possible attention. Need I say here how light it

makes the heart feel to thus meet kind and charitable acquaintances? Beside the gracious reception extended to us by Mrs. Clark, I cannot forget mentioning her unbounded liberality in furnishing us with provisions for the remainder of our journey, to which she added tea and sugar, articles very scarce in the North, also very expensive, on account of the heavy freight charges levied on them. After remaining from Saturday until Tuesday, I concluded to resume my journey, but not without having once more begged of her to accept my deepest thanks. All the gentlemen belonging to the Hudson Bay Company are equally polite and kind to our travelling Sisters. Leaving Carlton on the 21st, we continued our route, and very soon found ourselves approaching Saint Boniface; however, I felt the time long in my great desire to be again with our Sisters, and in the hope that those on route for McKenzie River might still be there, thus affording me the occasion of bidding them a last farewell; but, alas! such was not my lot. God had prepared a sacrifice; while with great sorrow of heart I soon learned that they had left the previous evening for their mission in the far-off North. This disappointment was a bitter one, as I had sincerely desired to speak a parting word of encouragement and hope, feeling that never again would we see each other here below. However, God's will be done; we must submit; little was I prepared for the awful trial with which Heaven had menaced our entire Community. Scarcely had I spent a few days at Saint Boniface, when a telegram was received containing the startling news of the sudden death of our Mother-General—news which would have rendered us inconsolable in our grief had we not faith and hope to sustain and encourage us, knowing in our deep affliction and feeling, with soul and heart that nothing happens without Heaven's permission. A second telegram demands my immediate departure for our mother-house. Hurrying with my preparations, I left St. Boniface on the 29th of June, and after a prosperous though sad trip, arrived in Montreal on the 8th of the following month.

Permit me here, dear benefactors, to renew my expressions of gratitude. Your secret charity, dropped into the

hand of the poor, has ascended to the Throne of God; will draw down on you and on all those dear to you treasures of benedictions which carry joy and happiness to your domestic circles.

Should I ever again visit the North, I will try and respond in a more worthy manner to the desire of those who wish to peruse the pages which tell of our far-away missions, and interest those who have souls replete with faith and charity.

NOTE.—Persons wishing to contribute any thing towards the support of the above mentioned charitable institution, are requested to forward it to the General Hospital, Grey Nunnery, Guy Street, to the address of the Sister charged with the Department of the Missions of the North West.

General Hospital of Saint Boniface, Manitoba, founded by Bishop Provencher, 24th of April, 1844.

The same works are performed in this as in the mother house, having for the purpose 22 Sisters and 11 girls. The latter offer their services voluntarily. The boarding-school establishment is situated on the same land as the above-mentioned,—this land having been granted to them by His Grace Archbishop Taché.—3 Sisters and 3 girls.

The mission of St. Francois Xavier, Manitoba, founded by Bishop Provencher in 1850.—2 Sisters and 2 girls.

Mission of Saint Norbert, Manitoba, founded by Archbishop Taché, 1858.—3 Sisters and 1 girl.

Mission of Saint Vital, Manitoba, founded by Archbishop Taché, 1860.—2 Sisters and 1 girl.

Youville Hospital, at Saint Albert, founded by Bishop Grandin, 19th Sept., 1858.—8 Sisters and 4 girls.

Hospital of Saint Bruno, at Isle à la Crosse, founded by Archbishop Taché, 4th of June, 1860; to-day belonging to Bishop Grandin.—5 Sisters and 3 girls.

General Hospital of Providence, at McKenzie River, founded by Bishop Farand, 17th Sept., 1866.—7 Sisters and 1 girl.

Saint Joseph's Hospital, at Lac Labiche, founded by Archbishop Taché, 1862.—4 Sisters and 3 girls.